

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

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P R 171530Z APR 75
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7920
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
RUFHGVGMVUSMISSION GENEVA 246
AMCONSULATE MUNICH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRAGUE 855

GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR SHERER

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CZ (DUBCEK, ALEXANDER)
SUBJECT: HUSAK SPEECH: A WARNING TO DUBCEK

SUMMARY: IN A HARSH SPEECH TO A COMBINED PLENARY OF THE
CZECHOSLOVAK, CZECH AND SLOVAK NATIONAL FRONT CENTRAL COMMITTEES
APRIL 16, GUSTAV HUSAK DIRECTLY ATTACKED ALEXANDER DUBECK. HE
DECRIED NOT ONLY DUBCEK'S DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE
CRISIS YEARS OF 1968 AND 69 BUT ALSO HIS ALLEGED INTENT TODAY-
CLEARLY ILLEGAL- TO LEND SUPPORT TO ATTEMPTS AT WEAKENING KSC
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CONTROL AND POLICIES IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA. REFERRING TO THE

OCTOBER 1974 LETTER FROM DUBCEK TO THE FEDERAL ASSEMBLY CURRENTLY BEING PUBLICIZED IN WEST (E.G., OBSERVER APRIL 13), HUSAK PUT DUBCEK CLEARLY ON NOTICE THAT THE FORMER KSC LEADER IS FREE TO LEAVE CZECHOSLOVAKIA, BUT WOULD BE IN VIOLATION OF LAW IF HE REMAINED AND PERSISTED IN ATTACKS AGAINST CURRENT REGIME. END SUMMARY

2. THE PURPOSE OF HUSAK'S BITTER WORDS, HE SAID, WAS TO TELL ONE AND ALL THAT EMIGRE AND INTERNAL CRITICISM OF PRESENT KSC POLICIES WOULD COME TO NAUGHT, THAT THE KSC WOULD REMAIN STEADFAST IN ITS "SUCCESSFUL" PATH TO ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROGRESS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA. NOTING THAT FORCES OF "INTERNATIONAL REACTION" HAD CONSISTENTLY TRIED TO OBSTRUCT THIS PATH, HUSAK POINTED TO PELIKAN, SIK, PACHMAN, LOEBL AND OTHERS AS HAVING ASSISTED THEM.

3. WHEN THESE HAD GONE STALE, HE SAID, "OUR ENEMIES" TURNED TO SMRKOVSKY. DESPITE THE REGIME'S INTENT TO GIVE SMRKOVSKY DECENT AND HUMANE TREATMENT IN THE MONTHS BEFORE HIS DEATH, THE FORMER FEDERAL ASSEMBLY CHAIRMAN HAD LET HIS WORDS AND NAME NEVERTHELESS BE USED BY THE "PELIKANS" WHO TODAY SOUGHT TO ORCHESTRATE "THIS CONCERT OF ANTI-CZECHOSLOVAK AND ANTI-COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA." WITH SMRKOVSKY GONE FROM THE SCENE, THE EMIGRE SPOILERS INDEED WERE PLEASED WITH "A NEW LEADER WHOM THEY MIGHT MISUSE AGAINST THE CZECHOSLOVAK PEOPLE, AGAINST OUR REGIME. AND HARDLY BY COINCIDENCE, IT WAS DUBCEK WHO LENT HIMSELF TO THIS SHAMEFUL FUNCTION." HUSAK MAKE IT PERFECTLY CLEAR IN AS MANY WORDS THAT DUBCEK WAS COMING UNDER FIRE NOW NOT FOR 1968 BUT FOR HIS OCTOBER LETTER (AND WE THINK ALSO FOR THE PUBLICATION IN ITALY OF HIS LETTER TO MRS. SMRKOVSKY AFTER HER HUSBAND'S DEATH EARLY IN 1974). HE SAID POINT BLANK THAT IT WAS HIS INTENTION TODAY ONLY TO PUBLICIZE DUBCEK'S CURRENT ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE ANTI-PARTY, ANTI-STATE ELEMENTS, NOT TO OPEN A LOYALTY CHECK OF SMRKOVSKY'S AND DUBCEK'S CAREERS WHICH HAD BEEN, IN FACT, BETTER IN THE PAST.

4. HUSAK WAS AT HIS SARCASTIC BEST AT TWO POINTS IN THE SPEECH: THOSE WHO SET FIRE TO THE (1968) HOUSE COULD NOT BE BLAMED AT ALL FOR WHAT WENT WRONG IN THE COUNTRY, HE SAID. NO, THOSE WHO STRUGGLED TO REBUILD IT WERE GUILTY. THAT WAS THE MORAL OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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SMRKOVSKY MEMOIRS. THEN, NOTING THAT THE KSC POLICY TILL NOW HAD BEEN TO LET THE PACHMANS AND HOCHMANN'S LEAVE CZECHOSLOVAKIA IF THEY REALLY FOUND COMFORT IN A BOURGEOIS ATMOSPHERE (ANOTHER PROOF OF THEIR PERFIDY), HUSAK SAID THAT EVEN DUBCEK COULD LEAVE, TOMORROW IF HE WISHED. ALL HE NEEDED TO DO WAS TO PACK HIS TRUCK AND GO--PERHAPS TO SWEDEN, HUSAK SUGGESTED WRYLY, FOR THEIR PRIME MINISTER OLAF PALME HAD JUST DESCRIBED DUBCEK AS A GREAT REPRESENTATIVE OF DEMOCRATIC

SOCIALISM UNFORTUNATELY WATCHED DAY AND NIGHT BY STATE SECURITY OFFICERS. "AS FAR AS I KNOW, MR. PALME REGARDS HIMSELF AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM. WE OFFER HIM DUBCEK, STARTING TOMORROW, AS AN EXPERT OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM OR AS A SEASONED INSTRUCTOR. TRUE, I AM NOT SURE WHAT THE SWEDISH PEOPLE, WHOM I RESPECT, WOULD HAVE TO SAY WOULD DUBCEK RUIN THE SWEDISH KINGDOM WITHIN SEVERAL MONTHS AS HE DID CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN 1968." INDEED, IT WAS THIS PRICE "WE PAID TOO DEARLY FOR 1958" WHICH WAS PROMPTING HUSAK TO SPEAK OUT NOW ABOUT THE DEMAGOGUES WHO TODAY WERE ATTACKING CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

5. HUSAK RELEGATED THOSE "WHO HAVE FALLEN FROM THEIR HIGH (1968) HORSE" TO A ROLE TODAY OF CICKINESS, MEGALOMANIA, AND UNSTABLE PRETENSE WHICH HAS LED TO THE ROAD OF OPEN TREASON. THUS HIS WARNING BEGAN. "AFTER 1969 WE DECIDED TO SETTLE MATTERS THROUGH POLITICAL, NOT ADMINISTRATIVE METHODS" (IN PARTY PARANCE THIS MEANS THERE WERE NOT POLITICAL TRIALS.) BUT TODAY, "INDIVIDUALS AND A FEW GROUPS ARE ENTERING ON AN EXPRESSLY OPPOSITIONAL, DISRUPTIVE AND ENEMY COURSE." RECALLING A CONVERSATION HE HAD HAD WITH DUBCEK JUST AFTER THE LATTER'S OUSTER IN APRIL 1969, HUSAK SAID HE HAD TOLD THE CREST-FALLEN DUBCEK THAT IT WAS MISTAKEN TO THINK MASS HANGINGS, EXECUTIONS AND PRISON SENTENCES WERE TO MARK THE FUTURE. "I REPLIED TO HIM: I AM NOT A PARTISAN OF SUCH WAYS AND METHODS. WE WILL STIVE FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION AND, IF YOU SAY YOU ARE A COMMUNIST, YOU WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORK. SHOW THAT YOUR ARE A COMMUNIST."

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INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

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GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR SHERER

6. THUS, HUSAK EXPLAINED, THERE HAD BEEN NO ARRESTS AND NO EXECUTIONS, BUT FOOLISHLY THOSE ENEMIES OF CZECHO-SLOVAKIA INTERPRETED THIS AS "STUPIDITY AND WEAKNESS." EVERYTHING HAD ITS LIMITS, HUSAK CAUTIONED. THE EMIGRE RENEGADES WERE NOW OPENLY TREASONOUS, OPENLY "PLAYING UP TO THE ENEMY." THEN CAME THE SPECIFIC WARNING TO DUBCEK: "HE HAS CHOSEN THE WAY OF THE BOURGEOIS AND INTERNATIONAL REACTION, AND HE IS FREE TO GO. BUT IF HE STAYS HERE, AND THIS APPLIES TO EVERYBODY ELSE, HE WILL FULLY ABIDE BY CZECHOSLOVAK LAW. ALL THE EFFECTS OF BREAKING (IT) APPLY TO BOTH HIMSELF AND HIS KIND..."

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7. COMMENT: HUSAK'S SPEECH FOLLOWED ONE BY KEMPNY, THE "MAIN" ONE DELIVERED AT A SESSION OSTENSIBLY DEVOTED TO RECOUNTING NATIONAL FRONT "SUCCESSES" OVER THE LAST THIRTY YEARS. PUBLICITY IN THE WESTERN PRESS OVER THE DUBCEK LETTER, SENT IN OCTOBER AND PROBABLY KNOWN TO HUSAK SINCE THEN, LIKELY WAS THE LAST STRAW THAT INDUCED HUSAK TO BREAK HIS SILENCE OVER THE UNFLATTERING SERIES OF REFERENCES TO THE REGIME IN THE EARLIER DUBCEK LETTER TO MRS. SMRKOVSKY, THE SMRKOVSKY MEMOIRS THEMSELVES, AND DUBCEK LATEST LETTER WRITING VENTURE.

8. WHY SPEAK OUT NOW, AND SO HARSHLY? PERHAPS HUSAK'S NATURAL POLITICAL ENEMIES ARE PUTTING THE PRESSURE ON, AGAIN, AS WE THINK THEY DID IN 1971, FOR SOME KIND OF SHOW TRIALS TO COUNTER THIS PERCEIVED ANTISTATE ACTIVITY. IN 1971, THE CRIME WAS THE PAMPHLETEERING AGAINST THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS, AND THE TRIALS DID TAKE PLACE THROUGHOUT 1972. THIS IS AN OMINOUS PRECEDENT FOR DUBCEK: THE OFFICIAL LINE IN 1972, AS THE TRIALS EVOLVED, WAS THAT THE DEFENDENTS, WHO HAD BEEN ACTIVE

PROPOSERS DURING THE 1968 PRAGUE SPRING, WERE BEING CALLED TO ACCOUNT FOR THEIR TRANSGRESSIONS IN 1971, NOT 1968. HUSAK'S PURPOSEFUL DISTINCTION BETWEEN DUBCEK IN THE CRISIS YEARS AND DUBCEK IN 1975 THUS IS A HAUNTINGLY FAMILIAR, DISTURBING TUNE.

9. HOWEVER, IF HUSAK PRESIDING OPPONENTS IN FACT HAVE BEEN SCREAMING FOR BLOOD, THE KSC LEADER MAY HAVE DEFUSED THE SITUATION SOMEWHAT. BY PERSONALLY PUBLICIZING AND ENDORSING THE "SOLZHENITSYN SOLUTION" OF LETTING THE PACHMANS AND HOCKMANN OUT OF THE COUNTRY AND BY PUBLICLY OFFERING THIS OPTION TO DUBCEK, HUSAK NOT ONLY AS PUT THE BALL IN DUBCEK'S COURT, AS IT WERE, TO GET OUT OR KEEP QUIET, BUT HE HAS CRATED BREATHING SPACE FOR DUBCEK TO MAKE HIS INTENTIONS KNOWN. IF THE X KSC FIRST SECRETARY STAYS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HE KNOWS NOW THAT THE LAW ON ANTI-STATE ACTIVITIES WILL BE APPLIED IN FULL.

10. THIS IS THE SECOND TIME SINCE 1968 THAT DUBCEK
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FINDS HIMSELF IN THIS DILEMMA. IN MID-1970, AFTER HIS STINT IN TURKEY AS CSSR AMBASSADOR, HE ALSO HAD THE CHOICE OF REMAINING ABROAD--IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DONE ILLEGALLY AND AT THE RISK OF LOSING HIS CITIZENSHIP. GRANTED, SOME OF HIS FAMILY WAS STILL IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, TOO. BUT HE MUST KNOW, AS DO ALL READERS OF RUDE PRAVO, THAT PACHMAN AND HOCHMANN WERE BOTH STRIPPED OF THEIR CITIZENSHIP AFTER BEING ALLOWED TO LEAVE. THE END RESULT, THUS, IS THE SAME: A SORT OF LOVE IT OR LEAVE IT-- AND LOSE IT--SITUATION.

11. FINALLY, HUSAK HAS PLACED HIMSELF APENLY WHERE MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE OBSERVERS THOUGHT HE WAS, ON THE SIDE OF MODERATION DURING THE NORMALIZATION YEARS IN DEALING WITH THE MEN OF 1968. NO TRIALS, NO EXECUTIONS, NO ARBITRARY JUDICIAL RETRIBUTION: THESE WERE HUSAK'S OWN POSITIONS, NOW PUBLICLY STATED FOR THE RECORD, BUT WITH THE IMPLICATION THAT THERE WAS STRONG OPPOSITION TO THEM AND TO HIM AT THE HIGHEST PARTY LEVELS. THE MEANING BOTH OF HUSAK'S WORDS AND THE PNENOMENON OF THE SPEECH ITSELF IS THAT SOME OF HUSAK'S RIVALS ARE STILL PRESOCOPIED WITH HARD LINE REPRESSION. HUSAK IS SAYING THAT THE ONLY WAY HE CAN MAINTAIN THE PAST MODERATE APPREACH--AND THE ONLY WAY DUBCEK CAN CONTINUE TO ENJOY HIS RELATIVE FREEDOME--IS FOR DUBCEK TO DISAPPEAR INTO ABSOLUTE SILENCE OR INTO ULTIMATE EXILE. THE STRENGHT OF THIS SPEECH GIVES US SOMEINSIGHT INTO THE STRENGHT OF THE CONTINUING PRESSURES UPON HUSAK. THROUGH THIS

INTEMPREATE STATEMENT, HUSAK HAS AGAIN REMIDED US THAT
HIS PRINCIPAL PREOCCUPATION, DAY TO DAY AND YEAR TO
YEAR, IS WITH THE LIVING SHADOWS OF 1968.
PERRY

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